Learning Disorders

Students seeking accommodations for a Learning Disorder must provide documentation that establishes that the condition is significant enough to be disabling. This means that the student is substantially limited in one or more major life activities compared to most people and that reasonable accommodations are necessary to ameliorate the impact of the disability. Typically, a complete psychoeducational assessment that includes the elements outlined below is necessary to demonstrate that the student has a disability and that accommodations are necessary to allow the student equal access to the University.

1. Documentation should be current, based on an adult-normed assessment, and the last date of assessment should be stated.
2. Documentation should be typed, signed by a qualified professional* and submitted on official letterhead. Professionals providing documentation should include information concerning their credentials.
3. The report should include a specific diagnosis of DSM-V or equivalent criteria.
4. The evaluation should include a thorough clinical interview and developmental history, rating scales, checklists (both self-report and collateral sources), medication history, and childhood school information. An interpretative summary of all evaluations should be included.
5. The report should state the functional limitations to the student’s major life activities that are indicated by these assessments. Describe the current impact of the learning disorder on the student academically. The results of a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation should be submitted, including an aptitude assessment (e.g., Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale III), an achievement battery (e.g., Woodcock Johnson Psychoeducational Battery III: Tests of Achievement) and an information processing assessment (e.g., Wechsler Memory Scale III). Additionally, evaluators are encouraged to include additional assessments that, based on their knowledge of the student, would provide objective data that highlights the impact of the learning disorder on the student’s functioning. One example of helpful assessments might include a Nelson-Denny Reading Test.
6. Based on test and other assessment data, the qualified professional should offer specific recommendations for accommodations and a detailed explanation as to why each accommodation is needed.
7. The report should include the results of other appropriate assessment measures to support a differential diagnosis, to rule out medical and/or psychiatric factors or to disentangle the learning disorder from co-existing disorders should be provided.

*The following professionals would generally be considered to be qualified: clinical or educational psychologists, neuropsychologists, learning disability specialists and medical doctors who specialize in specific learning disabilities. Parents are not appropriate evaluators, even if they are otherwise qualified.

Students or evaluators who have any questions about what type of evaluation is required are encouraged to call and speak with Disability Resources. We recognize that evaluations are expensive and time-consuming, and we regularly work with students and their evaluators to identify the most efficient evaluation possible.

Many Washington University students also take other standardized exams during their time at the University, such as the MCAT, GMAT, GRE, LSAT, State Bar exams, MPRE, etc. When seeking testing for Washington University, Students are strongly encouraged to also look at the requirements of those standardized exams that the student is reasonably likely to take. Many testing agencies have requirements more stringent than
Washington University, but with some planning, students can obtain an evaluation that will cover all their needs while at the University.